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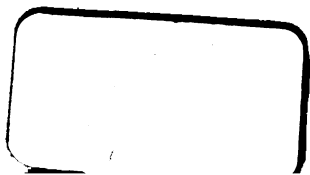
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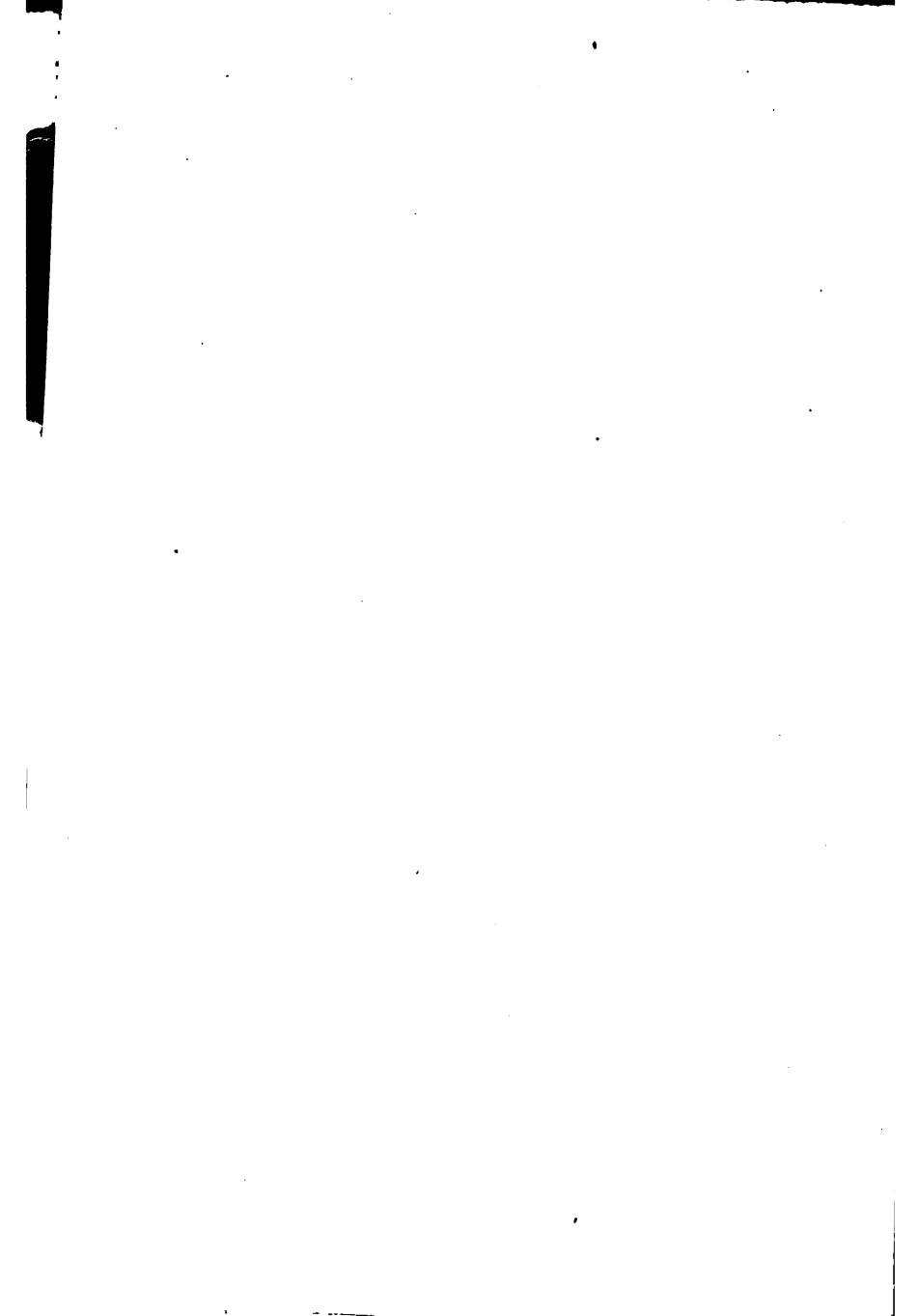
PORTRAITS
Poems To Marias
And
Other Poems

RALPH GORDON



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PORTRAITS

Poems To Marias

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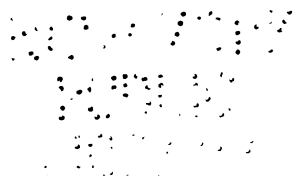
Other Poems

BY

RALPH GORDON



THE STRATFORD CO., Publishers
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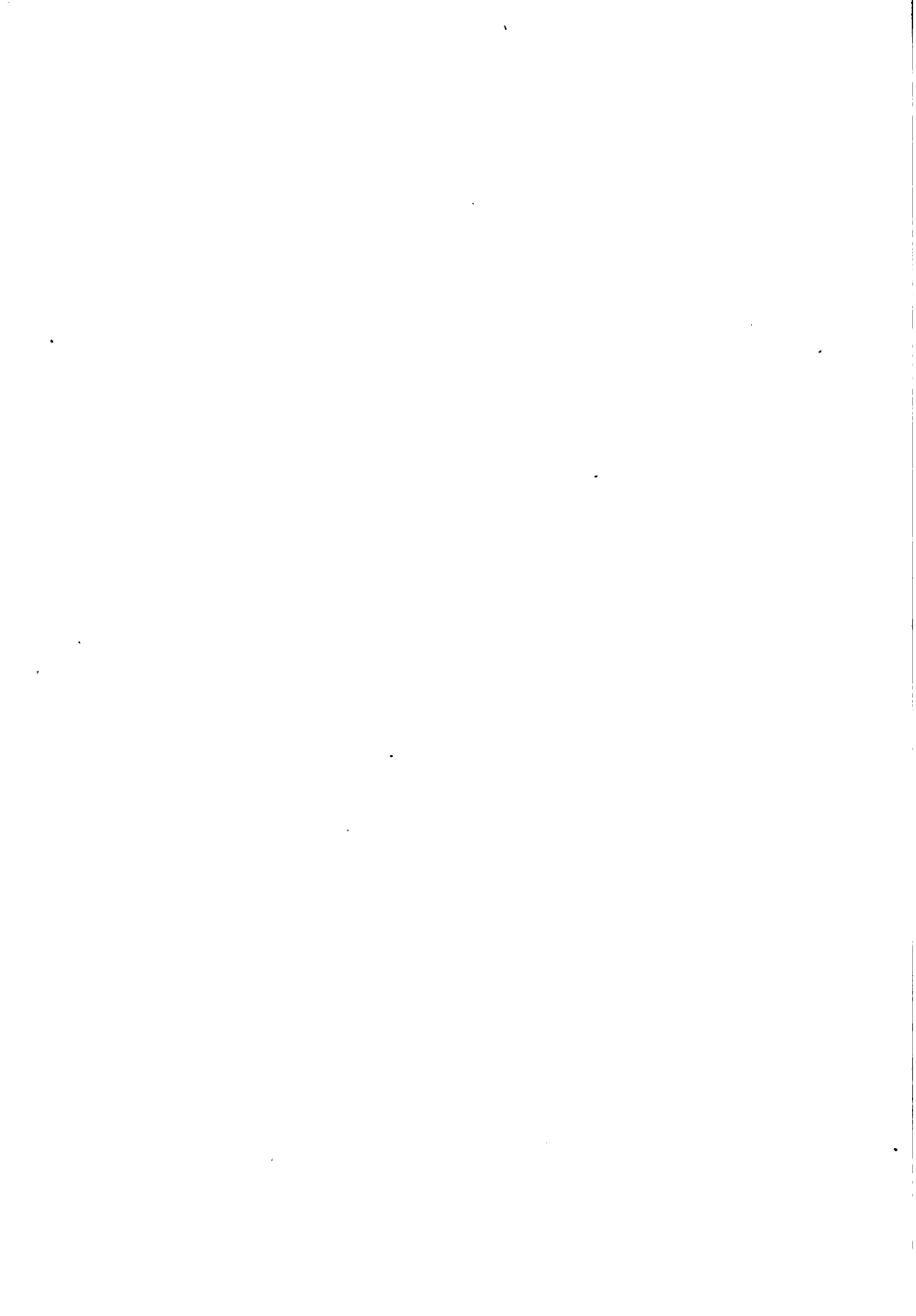
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To My Beloved Brother
William Marias Malisoff
These Poems are Dedicated

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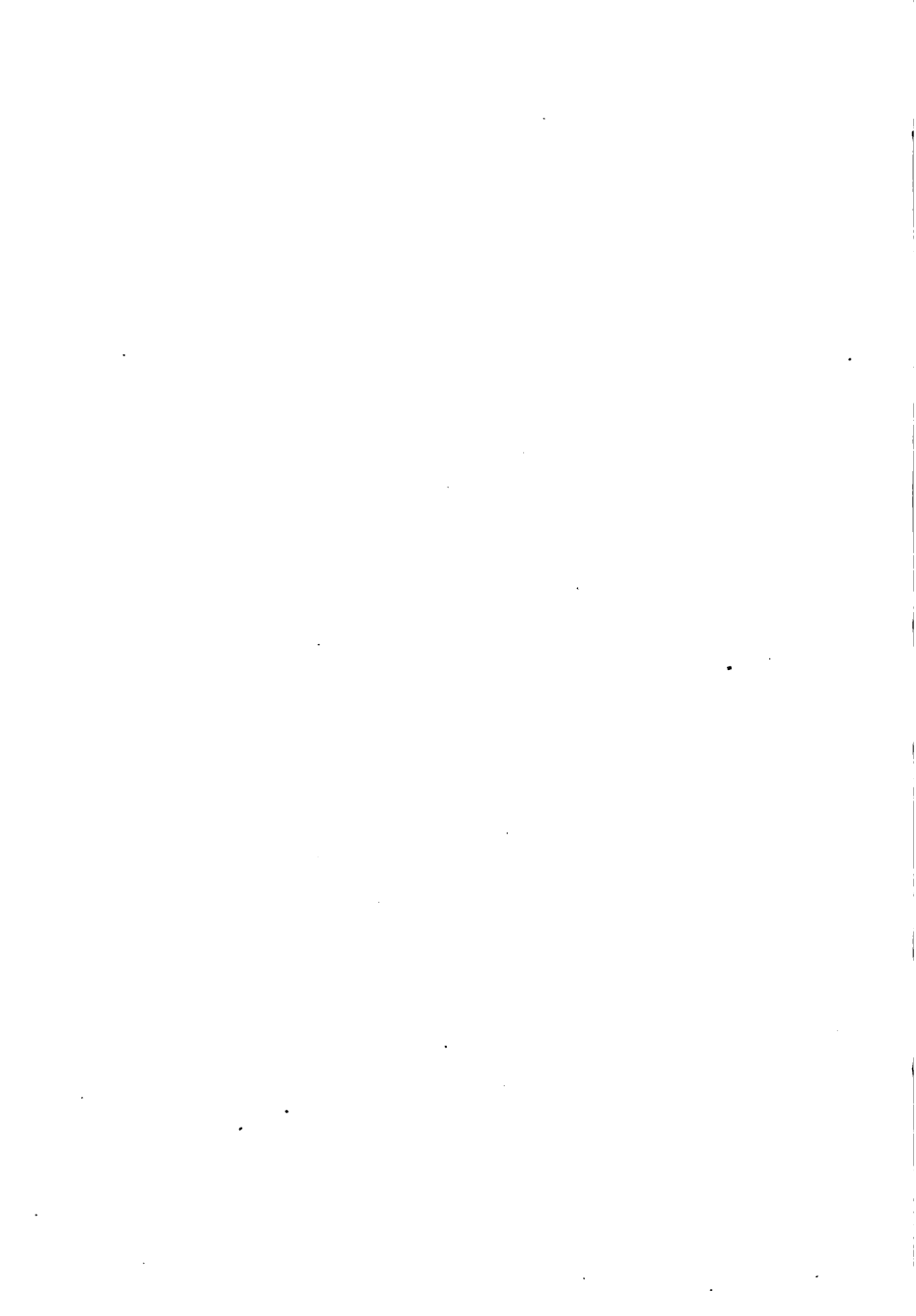
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To
Earl Fenton Palmer
These Portraits are Lovingly Dedicated



PORTRAITS



PORTRAITS

Sloppy Liz of Rockaway Beach

A HUMAN duck
So fat her plumpness trembles as she
waddles.
An oily, self-complacent smile
Upon her flabby face.
She rolls along
Like a ball of whale blubber;
Unkempt, perpetually in semi-negligeé;
Midsummer moisture glistening on her flaming
cheeks;
Each day she rolls her volume past our house;
And rain or shine she smiles complacently.

PORTRAITS

The Beard

A FLOWING beard
More precious much
Than child on mother's breast.
A tender hand passed through its sinuous coils
Down-curved luxuriant on a well-plumped front.
Caressed and fondled
With meticulous care
Admired by ladies of the hoop-skirt age
And mocked by none
But sacrilegious youth ;
Proudly cradled
On a haughty breast ;
And lulled to sleep
By after-dinner snores,
It leads a life
Of comfort and of ease
Most highly suited
To its majesty.

PORTRAITS

Old Mr. _____

A SHRIVELED ham :
Two bleary eyes
Sunk in a creviced face
And peeping out
With dilute petulance.
A voice high strung
To thin and screechy treble
And breaking into whistling
Gasps and sobs.
He sits and peels potatoes
By the hour
His mumbling jaw
Accompanying his knife.

PORTRAITS

A Gossip

A VOICE of honey-sweetness
Well controlled,
And held in leash
Like an all-eager hound.
A power reserved
And used with tender care;
Each small expenditure
Made most efficiently;
And nicely calculated
To achieve its end.
A fearful instrument:
The Voice of Envy,
And the Tongue of Treason
Steeled to a sword against whose fatal stroke
No shield avails;
Mellifluous, refined,
Quintessence of a studied kindness;
Yet like the serpent bearing in its coils
The fangs and poison of a hideous death!

PORTRAITS

A Quail

A LITTLE woman,
Short and plump,
Togged out in a new suit
Of Shepherd Plaid.
On tiny feet
She runs this way and that
From stand to stand
In the Green Grocer Store.
With bird-like movements
Peeping at the goods;
Until dissatisfied she scurries out
And disappears beyond the open door.

PORTRAITS

A Talking Machine

A RUBBER face,
The jaw adjustable,
Huge, heavy, loosely-hinged,
Elastic in grimaces.
Here triteness clothes itself
In rumbling grandeur,
And thought becomed the humble servitor
Of voice.
Through lips that scarce are parted,
Petty thunder rolls;
And men attend,
And give an anxious ear;
But should those lips, half-soldered,
Break apart,
And outlet give to that tremendous voice,
How would the world stuff cotton in its ears
And pray for mercy of the silent grave!

PORTRAITS

Canine-Faced Mr.——

A BOSTON Bull:
Round eyes,
A wrinkled forehead,
And a mouth
In sadness drooping down at either end.
A little nose
Run up against a wall,
And left forever with a petty sneer.
This nose held high aloft
As with disdainful sniffing to assure
The world of its contempt.
The body clothed
In quiet gray,
And almost a nonentity;
But that caninal face,
Round eyes and drooping mouth,
Needs no support of a corporeal frame
But seems to float upon the vacant air.

PORTRAITS

Mrs. Far-About

A HIPPOPOTAMUS:
A vast amount
Compactly harnessed in.
A barrel strongly built
With girdling hoops.
No flabbiness,
Solidity in mass.
The head
A slightly elongated square
A trifle broader at the lower end.
The eyes, two little things
Beyond a pair of glasses
On a nose
That is as small as
All the rest of her is massy big.
Yet her feet, too, are little things,
And when she walks
She seems to be a top upon two points.

PORTRAITS

A Dainty Lady

A MINIATURE-FEATURED face :
A little nose ;
A little mouth ;
And little teeth ;
And little eyes ;
Beyond a little pair
Of gold pince-nez.
A pretty hat
With dainty clustered grapes ;
A creamy-beaded purse
Inwrought with pink rose-buds.
The tiny feet
Most exquisitely shod ;
The little hands most prettily bejewelled ;
And quick in motion
With the child-like smile
That ever lights her happy baby face
And sparkles in her cheerful, laughing eyes.

PORTRAITS

The Lady in Gray.

A DULL-GRAY street,
A dull-gray house,
A window gray with dust.
She sits and gazes
Through the dingy pane.
Her hair is dusty-white;
Her face an ashy hue;
She wears a shawl of faded, musty gray.
Her unambitious eyes
And sagging lips brood on a life
That once, all sunshine glow,
Now is long faded from her misty sight;
Long vanished into dim forgetfulness.

PORTRAITS

The Hog

WITH triple chins in front and back ;
Weighed-down, stoop-shouldered
By a mass of fat ;—
On legs that scarce can bear the weight
Of bulky, flabby, blubber-back,—
He takes his heavy-burdened way
From house to auto-car,
From auto-car to house,—
His little piggish eyes
And broad, flat snout,
Like rooting swine's, fixed lowly on the ground ;
His mind, fat-'cumbered, totally engrossed
In sweet achievement of obesity .

PORTRAITS

The Dreamer

A VOICE of velvet softness
Gently rising like a cloud of volumed
smoke;
With something of a misty greatness,
A hazy consummation
Of thoughts too deep for words.
An earnest eagerness,
A tender, shy sincerity,
Taking keen delight
In nicest subtleties
Of dialectic art.
A mind for Beauty and for Truth;
Yet lost to Beauty's frankness,
Truth's simplicity.
A wanderer in cloudy atmospheres
Where glorious sunsets clothe themselves in
mists.

PORTRAITS

Handsome Paul

HANDSOME Paul,
Most admirably set up:
The leg, the nose, the hair
Delectable.
And prepossessing to the last degree;—
One look enough to charm, to captivate.
But shallow sweetness cloys;
'Tis depth of soul
We seek beneath ingratiating smiles.
And Paul is glossed and glazed,
Enamelled, and embossed
In figures of polite society;
But when the glamor of the surface dies:
And we seek earnestly
For what's within,
Alas, we find him
But a rosy husk:—
His mind's a toy;
His beauty is his soul.

PORTRAITS

A Lovable Masker

DEAR friend,
We know you.
Sunshine in shadow,
Starlight in mist and fog,
You cannot hide that pristine loveliness of
yours:
That sweetness, that frankness,
That pure manliness,
That cheerful saneness,
That soul of yours
Loving and beloved;
And beautiful in clear-eyed candor.

Would you appear brazen and bold,
You are quiet and modest;
We love you for it.
Would you appear wicked, calloused,
You are pure and tender as a child;
And we love you for it.
Would you appear world-wise, world-weary,

PORTRAITS

There is about you the freshness of everlasting
spring;
We love you for it.
Would you appear conscious of censure, of mute
disdain,
You blush with pleasure at our applause;
And we love you for it.
Would you appear not proud
To hold celestial heights;
Would you come down to us
In slough and slime,
How well you fail!
How gloriously succeed!
'Tis we who rise;
Not you that do descend;
'Tis we who rise
And with you scale those heights;
Then are we better men
For love of you.

Dear friend,
We would not have you other than you are,
Sunshine in shadow,
Starlight in fog and mist,

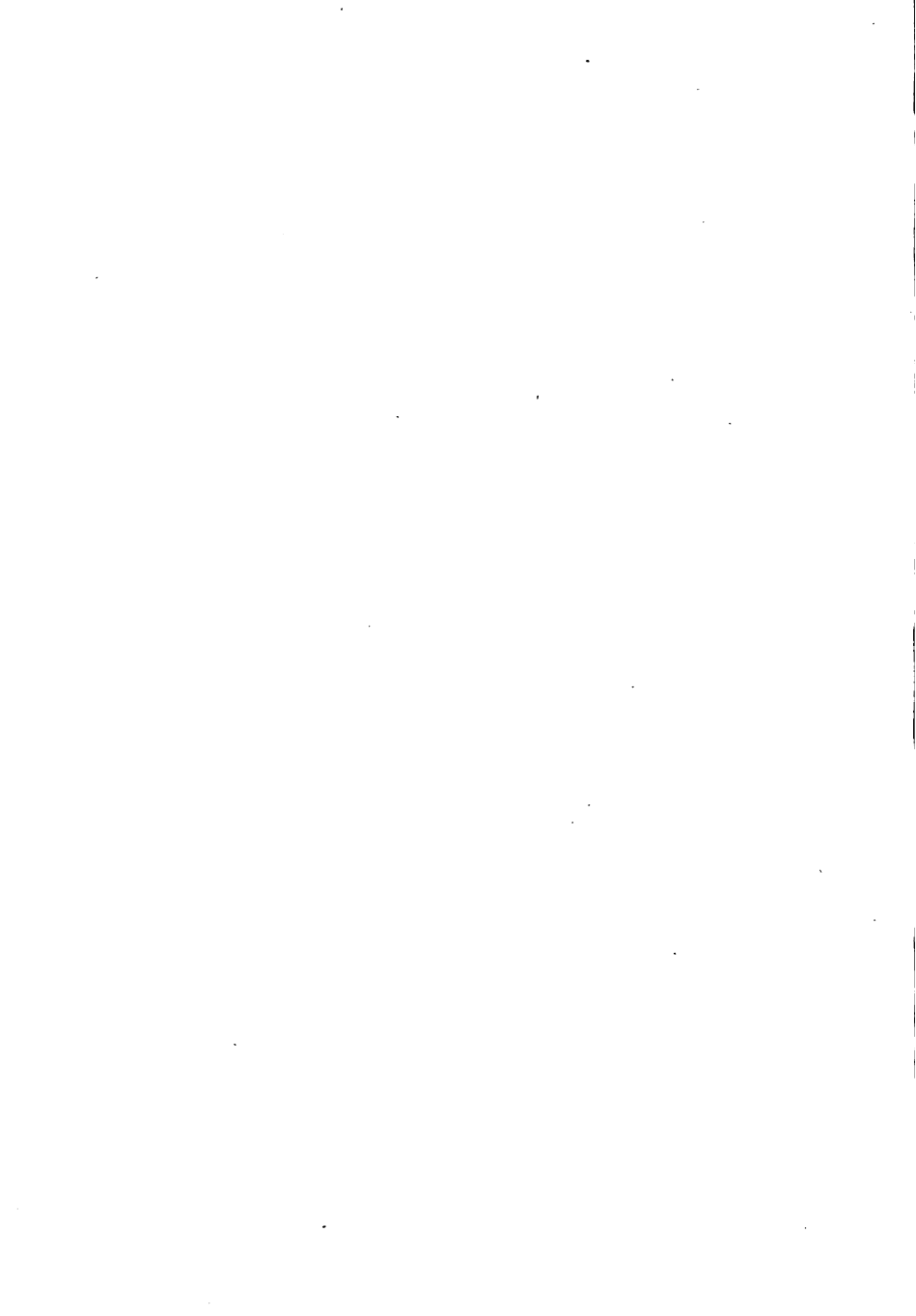
PORTRAITS

Lovable masker,
Know our hearts
As we know yours.
Love cannot hide its face
Behind a mask.
Soul speaks to soul
Though half the world's between

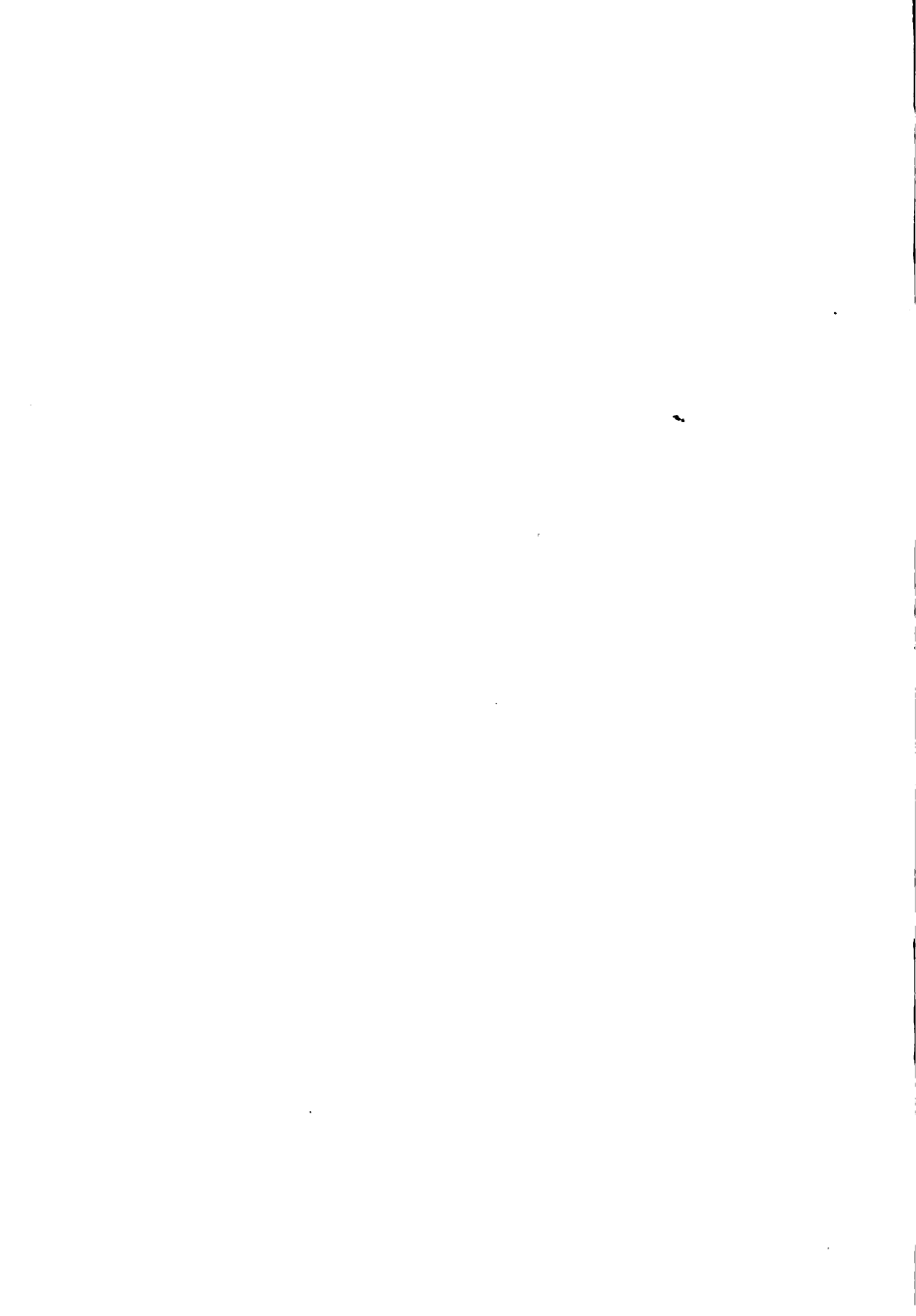
PORTRAITS

Mrs. Goriot

AN elderly lady
In a black, faded suit.
The dark hat graying with age.
The hair already white.
Her face washed out save for the loving smile
That all unbidden comes and goes,
Unconscious badge of doting motherhood.
She stands before the brilliant-lighted window
Where myriad-spangled, sparkling evening
gowns
Glisten and glow.
A sky-blue satin fronts the rich array.
Her weary eyes light up with quenchless greed.
A rosy mouth to-night will kiss her withered
cheek.
Grasping her cheap, old, worn and threadbare
purse,
She rushes in with trembling eagerness
To point her choice to the obsequious clerk.



POEMS TO MARIAS



POEMS TO MARIAS

First Poems

I

O H, my friend,
The joy of you has sunk into my very
being;
So that waking or sleeping,
At home, abroad,
By every path of life, on every threshold,
Your presence ever before me, works
A peace and a dear contentment;
Until I would in thankfulness exalt thee,
My friend, my friend.

II

“To heal the afflicted hearts of men,
Deep sorrow, long endured, has taught me.
From out of the lightless depths,
I come to give them light.

POEMS TO MARIAS

There in the darkness of night,
Yearning and striving,
At last I beheld the sun,
A glory of endless day.
Then turned I my eyes and looked
Back on the wretched, the blind.
For them is my heart, my mind,
My soul, my vision of light."

III

Arise my friend,
And go thou forth!
Upon the earth
The needy wait.
Give them thy heart
To find their worth;
Give them thy mind
To challenge fate;
Give them thy strength
To succour them;
Give them thy love
To banish hate.

POEMS TO MARIAS

IV

In the quiet moments,
When the world is fading,
And the peace of silence
Soothes my soul to rest;
Then do I behold you
At me calmly gazing,
And a radiant gladness
Glows within my heart.
I do smile you welcome,
You do answer smiling:
Oh the blissful moment,
Oh the sacred peace.

V

Joy is in you, my friend,
And life, and strength,
And power to do, and courage to endure;
Comfort in sorrow, light in discontent,
Wisdom in darkness, sympathy in pain:
A love which compasses round with heavenly
 peace
The poor, the weak, the needy, the oppressed.

POEMS TO MARIAS

VI

Where in my dreams have I met you, my friend?
Years and years have I waited.
How many nights in the lighted darkness of
sleep,
How many days in the dimness of lonely
thought?
How long, my friend, have you lived in my
heart
Before I beheld the sun given back by your eyes;
Before I beheld my soul soothed and lulled in
your eyes?

VII

Thou hast compassed me round with gladness;
From the stony paths of hatred hast thou led
me;
About me hast thou cast a halo
Of shining peace.

POEMS TO MARIAS

VIII

That mind of yours must not remain unseen,
Sheathed in the scabbard of a blinded race.
But like a blazing sword it must leap forth
To sear the darkness of their sightless eyes
With heavenly light.

IX

Still love and cherish me,
And I in you will find my lot and fate.
Joy is not single, but to beauty grows
By sacred union of embracing souls,
My hand in yours, my eyes upon your face,
What power of earth may strive to keep us
down.

X

The world will not ignore you.
Such a soul as in you finds its being
Was not sent upon the earth for nought.

POEMS TO MARIAS

Take courage then, and look into the future;
For beyond the peaks I see a radiant dawn.

XI

Sacred art thou to me
As the light of day,
The lingering dusk, the peace of the setting sun.

POEMS TO MARIAS

Wisdom

WISDOM pure and deep,
Like a crystal, sunset lake,
Holding the calm of the skies
In a cup of gold.

POEMS TO MARIAS

Unceasing Melody

I

UNCEASING melody, as of the wind or
waters
Flows ever from thee, Rare Mysterious.
Light of thine eyes shall lead me on and on,
Nearer and nearer, yet approaching not
The final presence of thine inmost soul ;
For thou art precious as the heart of change
Clothing itself each day in beauty fresh and
new.

II

Rare Spirit sent on earth to work us change,
Despair not that thy ways are darkling, see,
Thyself, thine own salvation, wins thee love
As broad and deep as an impetuous stream
That foams o'er rocks and caverns undivided

POEMS TO MARIAS

To hurl its gift into the vast of sea.
Noise and confusion are thine elements,
But in thy heart the calm of Paradise.

III

Days bring us change as does the blazing orb
In shadowing motion round the immortal tree.
But as the foot of shadows holds its place
Though lengthened flung athwart the sunset
earth,
So do we cling to immortality
And mark our destinies as passing shades.

IV

The flower springs from out the dark of
earth,
And freshet waters with gayest sparkle run.
Struggle doth quicken joy, and darkness hope.
The brightest dawning greets the gloomiest
night.
And so thy greatness born of sorrow's tears,
Will change the drops to jewels radiant bright.

POEMS TO MARIAS

V

Moments of sadness grow to years of joy ;
Despair is mortal, but divine is hope.
Nights pass unmindful, blending into day ;
The past is golden, and the future fair.
Then let the present tinge its pallid cheek
With rays serene of full eternity.

POEMS TO MARIAS

Dear One

I

DEAR one,
Not for one moment let us cease from
 song,
Lest life blaspheme the interval with raucous
 cry
On cry of horror and despair; but let
Sweet music keep our sacred peace
An endless bliss, so in melodious calm
We pass our days, teaching our souls their
 greatness.

II

Child, Life knows well to rut the weary road
Of circumstance with sorrows. Blind were we,
Then, mincingly to tread, rising and sinking

POEMS TO MARIAS

In the petty slough ; rather by far
To walk the reckless heights, making of sister
 peaks
Our rutted paths.

III

Broad-visioned be thou ever as the bird,
Making of earth one splendid harmony.
And let thy mind include thy nights and days,
And weave them into shadowy tapestries
Where joys and sorrows blend as woods and
 lakes
When clouds of even darken round the sun.

IV

Let joys and sorrows be a smouldering fire
Wherein broods Greatness as a flickering spark,
Which when the crumpling ashes of despair
Gray-veil the coals with choking dust of death,
Caught in the wind of hope will leaping soar,
And light the world with rose of rampant
 flame.

POEMS TO MARIAS

V

O Death, it may be we shall welcome thee
When life grows pale, and pines in languid
mists;
But while the fires of sunset and of dawn
Rage in our hearts, and smiles with tears blend
gay,
We'll cling to life and ride the shrieking blast,
Laughing at thee, and scoffing at despair.

VI

So long have Sorrow's importuning wiles
Droned at our ears in sick assail of hope,
That Courage laughs at each renewed attack;
And makes grim Death into a lopping clown!

POEMS TO MARIAS

Rainbow of Hope

BEHOLD the rainbow, how it glimmering
dawns
Upon the glassy lake, against the mountain
wall,
And mounts into the very sky of skies,
To fall serene, and all in splendor calm
Again upon the bosom of the lake.

So let our hopes, caught in the sun's bright
ray,
Glimmer to rainbows, painting earth and sky
With gorgeous tints of blessèd Paradise;
And rising on the beatings of our hearts,
Fall all as sweetly as the rainbow falls,
And die without the anguish of despair.

POEMS TO MARIAS

Psalm

THE voices of the earth, the skies, the seas
All sing thy praises and extol thy love:

Thou are enthronèd in the setting sun;
And in the grandeur of the starry eve:

The air is filled with thee, and heavy laden
With thy full sweetness as of many flowers:

Thou comest on the sound of dropping waters,
And in the melody of cataracts.

POEMS TO MARIAS

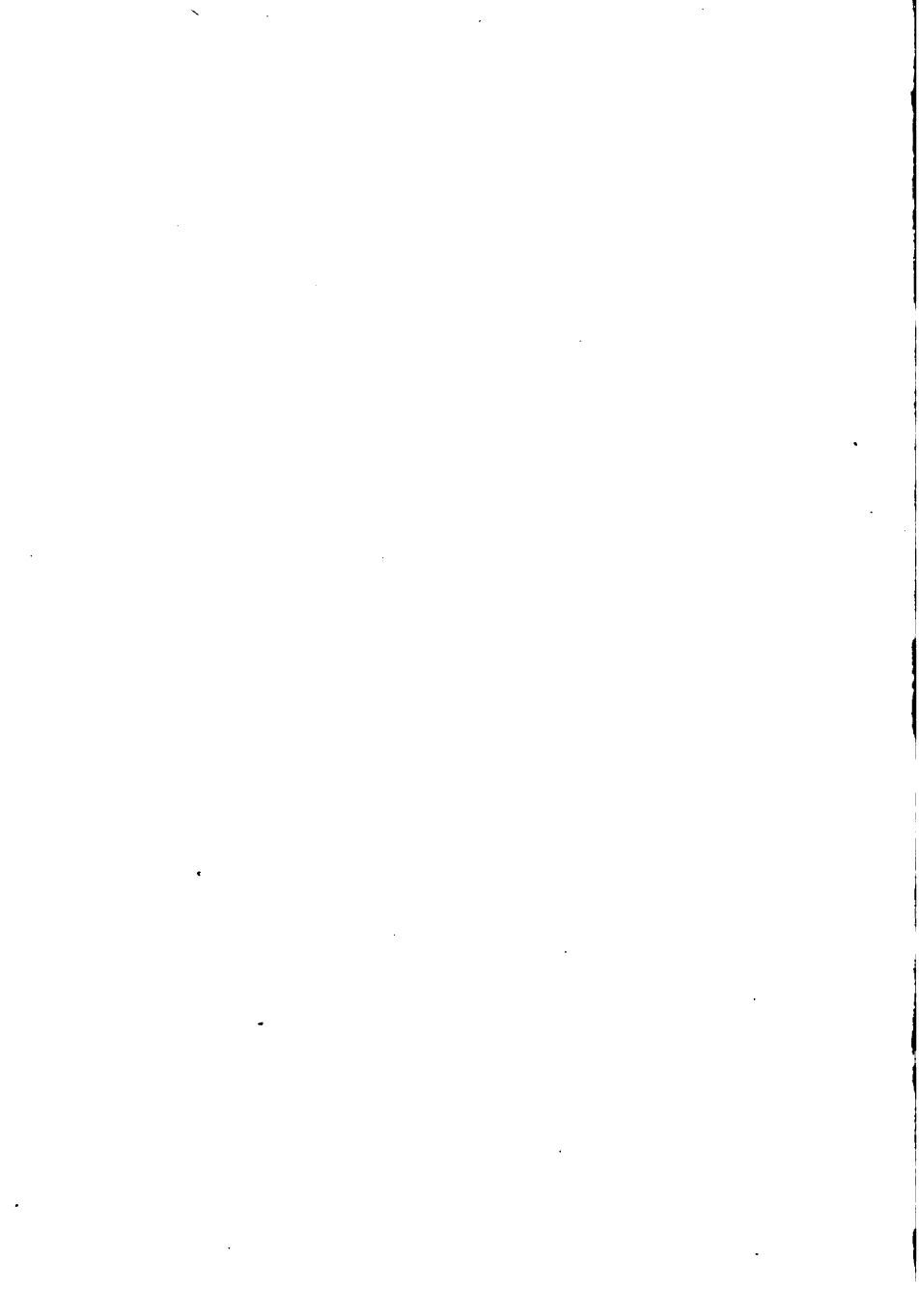
Ourselves Must Be Our Greatness

OURSELVES must be our greatness; cities
fall,
And mind and courage topple to their ruin;
Sorrows approach, and pass, and sink in dust;
And hopes blush meekly and are robed in death.

Greatness of man is as a dying flame
That greets the dawn with last pale flickering
glow;
And strength dissolves as do the fading mists
Fleeing beyond the frowning hills of night.

Ourselves must be our greatness; we alone,
Serene and strong amid despairing souls;
Ourselves must be our greatness; we alone,
Supreme and calm amid the clashing strife;
Ourselves must be our greatness; we alone,
Unvanquished though the world sink robed in
fire!

OTHER POEMS



OTHER POEMS

The Subway

I GET me down
Into the warm, fetid entrails of the lubber-
ing city.
The black maw gapes for me;
The stench of intestinal exhalations
Rise up about me.
I am jerked down the belching throat;
Foul gases choke my nostrils;
I am seized by an inexorable might:
Seized, swallowed and swept away
Down the awful tract of the suffocating dark-
ness.

And now all about me:—
The smell of hot steel;
And leather moist with sweat;
The rank, damp smell of the sweltering crowd;
The devilish burning bulbs
Over the ghastly placards;

OTHER POEMS

The swaying, sagging, jolting
Of the listless crowd ;
The throbbing might,
The roaring, crashing might
Of the iron-muscled fiend,
Hurling through darkness
With its clammy load
To dump it . . . *Slush*
Into some bubbling cauldron
Rank with the fumes of half digested things
That once were men
With sunshine playing on their wind-whipped
cheeks.

Squeezing, grinding,
Iron-muscled fiend
Hurling through endless night
With feverish haste
Upon the service of thy giant heart,
That heart whose beat
A million pulses swells ;
And makes to throb a mighty continent.
Hurling through endless night
Load upon load of hurrying menials

OTHER POEMS

Eager in service to a busy land.
Bearing them swiftly
To a thousand posts,
In shop and factory,
In office, store, and school;
Bearing them hence
When soothing shades of night
Have dropped their peaceful veil upon the
world.

Bearing the pleasure-seeker,
Gay of smile and flushed with zealous joy,
Seeking contentment in the melting wind.
The banker, plump-fed, rounded, rosy,
Yet stern beneath his silken gentleness;
A feline shrewdness
Lurking in his eyes;
His lips elastic
To his mind's dictates:—
Now softly-sweet,
Now iron-resolute;
Now generous as dallying breeze of May,
Now flinty-hard as is the Crack of Doom.

OTHER POEMS

The student busy with his books,
Or preaching gospel
To a well-trained friend.
The girlish lady primed and powder-puffed,
The raw-boned girl tricked up to matronliness.
The female sloven
And the genius male;
The doll, the tailor's dummy
And the tramp.
And Mr. Embonpoint
And Mrs. Far-about;
An elongated blond,
A puggy-fat brunette;
A silken-socked hook-nose,
Well Adam-appled and blue goggled-eyed.

The seedy clerk whom polish cannot save,
Whose cuffs are frayed,
Whose shoes are out at heel,
Whose hair is neatly slicked,
But thin, alas;
And straggling down,
Beneath a greenish hat,
Upon a pair of ears

OTHER POEMS

That never hear it seems,
The tantalizing swish of shower-bath.
The gangster with his gold and emerald cuffs,
And diamonds making bright his manly breast.
And a musician with contented look
Upon his precious, tender-sheltered instrument.
The cynic with the gimlet eyes
More diligent to ferret out a fault,
Than ever was a saint to save a soul.
The lawyer smugly conscious of his worth ;
And ready to dispute a sparrow's peep.

The theatre-goer with the Broadway gloss ;
The washerwoman with the weary droop ;
The factory-worker with her startling hat ;
The vampire of the Five-and-ten-cent-Store ;
A dainty lady from Fifth Avenue ;
And an atrocity of Grand Street's best.

The aged mother with the sad, sweet face,
The anxious mother with the furtive look,
The mannish mother with the self-concentred
poise

OTHER POEMS

And heavy hand for childish whimpering,
The modest mother with the big blue eyes,
The slattern mother
All embarrassment,
Half-shamed, half-proud
Of her young prodigies.
The gentle mother
Smiling to her babe
And blushing ever
At a stranger's gaze,
The mother with the babe,
The mother with the soldier son,
The mother with the daughter,
Lovely both,
The mother faded in her daughter's bloom;
The mother rich,
The mother poor,
The mother joyous
And the mother sad;
Yet always mother
Written on the face,
Or in the first, faint silvering of chestnut hair,
Or in the weariness of folded hands,
Or in the lovely depths of peaceful eyes.

OTHER POEMS

The poet happy in a vagrant smile,
Or moved to pity by a passing frown,
Resounding willy-nilly to the love,
The hate, the fury
Of the whirling world.
Men play upon him,
And his song
Is but the echo
Of the passing soul.
And oft his melody in Beauty soars,
And oft it grovels at the feet of Hate;
But ever are his eyes far-fixed on distant shores
Where the vast ocean of another world,
Breaks with a sweeter music than we know.

All these thou bearest, iron-muscled fiend,
Through heated darkness of the boweled earth.
And thou dost vomit forth
All breeds of men
That ever looked upon the light of day.

Thou art Democracy;
Thy maw the melting pot;

OTHER POEMS

And thou dost mould and shape the perfect
man;
For from the stench of Democratic Strife,
Where Beauty strives
In mortal grip with death,
There yet shall rise
A voice of mighty power,
And it shall lead aright the Sons of Man!

OTHER POEMS

Bach: Fugue

A PRIEST is but a torch of snowy flame
Rose-tongued. In vestments white he
stands,
His folded hands and eyes remote in prayer,
Lifted and yearning ever up and up;
Until his faint, pale face,
Touched with an ephemeral blush,
Tapering seems and soaring, higher, higher;
As when a fire upon a hill-top burning,
Lifts high aloft and mounts into the sky.

OTHER POEMS

Youth

To E. F. P.

FOR youth, for youth
Our life we lead;
Nor flee from death
When youth is fled.
Still life to know
As when anew
It burst upon our infant sight,
A trembling wonder, sharp delight,
And keen as cold October air,
Still life to feel
As a sacred gift,
Untainted and unperishing,
In beauty whole,
Forever fresh,
Perennial Spring,
Eternal stream
Of living waters from the fount

OTHER POEMS

Of the God of Love, the God of life;—
This gift we crave, this spirit seek,
This will attain
Or welcome death!

OTHER POEMS

Autumn

To E. F. P.

IN the Autumn,
In the Autumn,
In the freedom of the wildwood,
Where the wind, unreined, triumphant,
Drives impetuous through the treetops;—
I will get myself a new life,
I will get myself a free life,
Free as youth to do and triumph,
Free as youth to love and conquer.—
Not in joyous Spring's a spirit
Lusty as the breath of Autumn.

OTHER POEMS

The Oak To N. L.

I

AN oak in the forest, I stand,
Stretching my arms,
Lifting my head to the sunlight.
Winds creep, leaves fall
Through my immortal branches;
Steadfast I stand,
Nor heed the failings of frailty.

II

Now breath of the storm approaches,
Seething in rain and in lightnings;
Piteously they bend, my comrades,
Weak to the gusts and the thunders.
Lo, as I tower above them,
Defiant to wind and to water;

OTHER POEMS

Singing my song of triumph,
Chanting of strength never-vanquished,
Vainly they look to me,
Yearning in all their frail being,—
“What is thy strength, O Unconquerable?
“Tell us,” they sigh, “or we perish?”

III

And this is the song I sing them.

IV

“Of the air, of the sun, of the waters,
Of the earth, of the illimitable heavens,
Loving all things, I flourish,
Embracing all things, I prosper.
Sweetly the grass grows beneath me;
Tenderly sheltered, the sapling
Twines in my arms its frail branches,
Leaning and resting upon me.
Birds in the warmth of love,
Build their nests in my bosom;

OTHER POEMS

Breezes enamoured of May
Play in my sweet-laughing leaflets;
Sunbeams dancing and kissing;
Raindrops tinkling and gleaming,
Hang rainbow jewels upon me,
Radiant with love and with gladness."

V

This is the song I sing them
As the breath of the storm hushes softly.

VI

The sun is alive in my branches.
Earth and Heaven
Smile. Through the glimmering drops of rain
I look about me.
Fair is the earth as an orient bride
Hung with treasure of pearl.
Glad is the forest.
Not an emerald blade,
Not a tender sapling is broken.

OTHER POEMS

For all who have heard my song
Stand unconquered, triumphant.
"Love," says the twig to the leaf;
"Love," says the bird to its nest-mate;
"Love," whispers softly the wind;
"Love," sparkles gayly the water.

OTHER POEMS

Calm

To N. L.

CALM,
As the wind on the mountain,
Clear-blowing, mighty in stillness.

Calm,
As the mid-ocean billow,
Swelling and falling unbroken.

Calm,
As the deep-vaulted heavens,
Serene 'mid the scurrying cloud-rifts.

OTHER POEMS

Vengeance!

I

FLICKERING flame alive in the heart of
man,
Crusted, enslaved, begrimed
With the smoke of a thousand years;—
Terrible years and bleak,
Stretching in desert waste,
Years of the gloom of Death,
And perishing beauty of Life.

II

Flickering flame still glowing
Mid the dying embers of day;
Lost in the smoking sky
And the blackened meadow and farm;
Choked with the dust of the ashes of countless
dead;
Buried in ruin of the hearts of a million
slaves,—

OTHER POEMS

III

Leap forth anew,
Live, live!
On the breath of the dying live!
On the souls of the dead.
Live on the turf of the grave,
On the ashes of Death.
Breathe in the corpses of men,
In the mouldering skull.
In tears find thy water of life;
In misery blossom to light;—
They shall not have died in vain;
They shall not have died in vain.

IV

Leap forth and avenge thy dead,
O Spirit of Freedom and Life!

OTHER POEMS

Ode

I

WHAT men are these who walk the lofty
ways
Of peace and comfort and soft-dreaming love,
Far from the host of men, the darkening paths,
The heat and turmoil of a maddened world
Frantic in clutches of a Hellish Might!
Throbbing in cruel fear and insane wrath!

II

What men are these who speak of love and
peace
When hatred sweeps with condor-wings the
earth—
Darkling in sorrow of a brutish dream,
Groaning aghast, wracked by the pains of
death,

OTHER POEMS

Bearing through stifling night a horde of men,
Whose dull, complaining eyes do dim the sun
With sighless misery and voiceless grief.

III

What are these men who drink the light of day
With soft contentment and appraising glance,
Sampling the sweets of earth as 'twere a flower
And they the bee to honey it to gold.

IV

Oh blinded beasts, the earth's a festering sore
And ye do feed upon the blood of men!

V

Oh far enough of sacred brotherhood!
And far enough of pretty-lisping love!
Enough, enough of soft, sweet, tearful song;
Enough of blindness, cosy, fed and warm!

OTHER POEMS

VI

Blow chill O Wind of Death from the Halls of
Hate!
Blow bitter chill, O Wind, from the aisles of
pain;
Blow, blow with might of Hell, O Wind of
Tears;
Drown, drown the prattling breeze with deluge
dire!

VII

Strike terror to the hearts of selfish men.
Blow soothing veils of mist from the sleeping
eye;
Sweep into chaos full-fed, pampered lust,
Plump in the gulping gorge of senile greed;
Sweep fierce and keen across the warped
brain,
Numbing to chillness festering disease;
Sweep pure and clear across the feverish
brow,—
Oh Death! Be thou our soothing purgative!

OTHER POEMS

VIII

Cool, pure, and calm we'll welcome thee, O
Life;
Pure, calm, and clean, and ready for the balm.
Then in the cleansèd air the sacred flame
Shall burn with purer luster, brighter glow;
And souls of men, all hateful robes of night
Clear shed away, will rise in radiant light
To greet the dawning of a better day!

OTHER POEMS

When the Coffined Souls of Men:

WHEN the confined souls of men
Burst trammels;
And the flame of revolt
Leaps high in splendid frenzy;—
Beauty shall walk in carnage,
Justice in slaughter;
O Power of the Universe,
Reign,
Prosper our seeking!

OTHER POEMS

Towaco — Sketches

Sunrise in the Hills

THE mountains cowered in silvery mist
Beheld the sun; cast off their veil;
And gave back joyously the blue of heaven.
Then as the golden warmth of day rose level.
Upon the little hills, they lightened, blushed
and glowed
With Autumn red, faint-hued yet radiant;
As when a bride gives back her husband's love
In sweet assuaging of his passion's flame.

Meadow-lands

THE meadows stretched away to the bend-
ing sky
That hung with love upon the couchant hills.
Up-sloping gently went the rolling fields,
Till oak and pine stood out against the blue.

OTHER POEMS

Earth and Sky

A ROSE the mountain wall in Autumn glory
And on its summit sudden flashed the
sky,
A pure and dazzling blue.
One faint white cloud
Hung in the aerial space,
And then the azure lightened to the sun.

The Country Road

THE road went winding down through the
Autumn woods,
With our friends in the valley and a house on
the hill ;
The trees leaned whispering close, and the
Autumn winds
Brought voices of gladness holloing clear and
shrill.

OTHER POEMS

Sunset in the Hills

THE sun went down in deepening rose of
peace,
Warm with the love of a heart-easing day.
The moon all-eager came to view the sight,
Silvery-glowing before her time was come;
And all the stars with quickened twinkling
gleamed,
Until the West, so honored, blushed again.

OTHER POEMS

Symphony

I

WRITE!" says my Soul, though heart
and pulses throb;

"Write!" says my Soul, though mind in fever
burns.

But how to write when Life, a tangled skein,
Lies knotted doubts, and cares, and cruel
despairs?

"Write!" says my Soul, "until the thread is
free."

"Write!" says my Soul, "until it glittering
runs

As freshet waters from a frozen fount
Leap at the first, clear call of sudden Spring.

II

So yielding to the yearning of my Soul,
I give myself to passion sweet of song,

OTHER POEMS

Which soaring lightly on the wings of dawn,
Carolling Fate, and Force, and Circumstance,
Weaves melodies of changing goods and ills
Into the harmony of Life and Death.

III

The wailing of eternal sorrows throng,
And sighs and tears, and groaning, and dismay.
Shame sobs her doleful tale, and Misery
In quick, choked utterance of o'erwhelming
 woe,

Breaks melody with painstruck, sharp despairs,
And Death lends softness as of stifling dust.
Then muffled Hopes, and Fears in clutted rage,
And Anger of its own loud voice afraid ;
And rumbling thunders of insane desire
Grown inarticulate in passioned sound ;
Defeat, in delving bitterness and discord fierce,
Frenziedly beating at its own sick heart ;
And Weakness faltering in haltered step,
•Like gasping Death across the frozen snow ;
Dark Doubts in viperous tangle darting fangs
Of poisoned treason and congealing love ;

OTHER POEMS

Lies blatant, or in purring gentleness
Sweet-droning at the ear of innocence;
And Cowardice in pompous bombastry,
Or pallid with the sickly tinge of fear,
Scampering silly quick a breathless range
And choking on the beatings of its heart.
These come and more:—the bat-winged
 Jealousies,
Blinded of hate-bleared eyes and slavish souls,
Fluttering foul about the fane of love,
And shrieking with the cry of murderer's lust,
Or pining self-consumingly away.
Then Pain, wide-swirling with the mists of
 night,
Leading in leash her cohorts of dismay:—
Foul wrongs, and friendless acts, and lonely
 days,
Longing and Yearning bound in leaden chains,
Dreams lost upon the desert wastes of life,
And golden memories dimmed by solitude.
These rise in wailing piteous and soft,
Of their own frailty dying fast away.
At last, Love soothing all to tenderness,
And sweeping on with pure assuaging grace,
Comes wreathing melodies sublime and sweet.—

OTHER POEMS

Of sorrow and the vales of circumstance,
Of sadness glimmering to the dawn of joy,
Of tears that freshen all to purity,
And sighs that herald fresh returning strength,
Love sings, until the glowing harmonies
Grow mighty in the triumph of their joy,
And filling all the vast of sky and earth,
Throb to the spheres their messages of hope.

IV

So soars my passion on the wings of dawn,
And swells and triumphs on the rising day;
Until the dove-winged twilight brings the
 shades,
And calm of hushing waters, and the stars.

OTHER POEMS

Light of Ocean

IN the gray morning ;
By the misty waters ;
When one pale cloud alone
Whitened to the rising sun ;
In the gray morning ;
By the blue mist of the waters,
I lay at the fold of my tent
Where the light shone green at the dawning ;
I crouched and endured the cold,
And thought ;
And my thoughts went not from the ocean.

Calm and subdued
In thy faint robes of green,
Foaming upon the complaisant sands ;
Lighting their bosom smooth with thy kindling
glow,
Thy liquid caress.
Calm and subdued

OTHER POEMS

Amid thy emerald waves,
Though the white foam dances and leaps
On the curling crests;
Smoothly rolling in thy dark-billowing waves;
Fawning upon the complaisant sands;
Kissing the smooth-bosomed sands.

Reft of the sun-rise of life!

And yet thou too,
Sadly rolling in thy green-twilight mist,
Unpierced by the rose of dawn;
Veiled from joy
As the nun from the glances of men;
Calm in thy misty cave,
Barred from the golden light,
Thou whom the dark-blue sky
Shields from the eager sun;
Thou, deep-curtained in azure,
Lapt in thy twilight sleep;
Hushed in thy dreaming sleep,—
Reft of the sun-rise of life!
Upon thy misty bosom all the day
The hazy light shall fall,—
The slow blue light

OTHER POEMS

Ungathered from the ends
Of the thick-vaulting heavens
Robed in night.
The joyless light all day
Shall cling to thee;
And on the horizon's brink the purple mist
Repose in rayless depth of sombre strength.
Yet not in sadness dost thou roll
Thy sheen of might;
And not in sorrow do thy waters move
To their recess.
But calm contentment in thy marbly waves,
And smooth appeasement in thy glassy vales,
Nor tumult even in the frantic spray;
But all quiescence,
Motion self-sufficing;
As thou wert once
When shone the infant light,
So art thou now when far the world has ranged,
And swept the darkling moods of grievous
change.

Oh why is friendship weary,
Despairing, restless, fearing clouded eyes;
Why art thou,—

OTHER POEMS

Eternal flowing in thy clinging mists,—
Never, never, weary?

Dark is the light that should have been thy
dawning;

Dark is the sky that must extol thy sunset;
Radiance supreme might play upon thy waters;
Burn in thy emerald manes with blushing fires;
Seeth in the brushing surf that sweeps thy
beaches;

Dart in the veiled spray that leaps the azure;
Creep in the lavender lappings of foam-tongued
surges;

Sleep in the glowing breasts of purple billows;
Flow o'er the vastness of thee, swift glowing
and dying.

Why art thou still and contented;
Rolling thy calm-curved billows;—
Still and contented and quiet,
Hushing thy bellowing surges;
Spoiled of the dawning of life;
Creeping to death unexhorted!

OTHER POEMS

Why is friendship so weary?
Why art thou
Never, never, weary?

In the gray morning;
By the misty waters;
When one pale cloud alone
Whitened to the rising sun;
In the gray morning,
By the blue mist of the waters,
I lay at the fold of my tent
Where the light shone green at the dawning;
I crouched, and endured the cold,
And thought,
And my thoughts went not from the ocean.

OTHER POEMS

“Behold the shipwreck which is the world. Many threaten to sink the raft. Friendship is the raft.”
—Marias

World

I

WHEN I consider what the heart of man
Is, how at every trembling shadow
quaking,
Of every shade afraid; and when I think
Of this almighty power, this Love the world
Has called All Great, and set above all;—then I
Despair to make these trembling hearts the ark
And citadel of that divine conception.

II

For look you, what a panting thing is the heart
Of man: how soon engaged, how easily rebuk-
ed,
How eager to be wed, how hard to hold;
How, ever aimless, veering with the wind,

OTHER POEMS

Not knowing that which most it needs to know,
Its mastery, and that all-ruling Light,
Its Godhead, and its ministry of Love.

III

Yet men deluded, and with empty eyes,
Or following phantoms of the false gods' making,
Rule all the earth to frantic disarray,
And lose their gift in froth of blasphemy:
False Gods, false creeds, false thoughts, false
enterprise,
False suffering, false sorrow, and false sin.

OTHER POEMS

Wreck

I

BUT thou, my friend out of thy magic brain,
Hast seen the wondrous spectacle, and
found

Colors to paint it for the eyes of man :—
How all the ocean of the world is storm,
How chaos sends its plumèd darkness up
To quench the last pale fires of the sun,
How terror lights the pallid face of man.

II

Earth, sea, and sky forget their brotherhood,
And man his saintship; fellowman his fellow-
man
Forsakes. Self, hideous growing to itself
Alone, looks round to ease its hatred. Love

OTHER POEMS

Debased and shamed stands weeping, veiled,
and dressed
In mockery of its name. Eyes hateful, and
The grasping hands of jealousy flock 'round.

III

Now power gluts itself, pain suffers prostrate;
And ruled and ruler give their blinded ways
To the winds of night. Sin radiant shines in
robes
Of harloted Virtue; and Wisdom trails its
plumes
In dust, and willful, blinds its eyes. What
power
May save these men who of themselves know
not
The seed, the promise of their brotherhood?

OTHER POEMS

Raft

I

UPON the earth, and in the stormy heart
Of the world's thickest evils lies the
seed, its soil

The love of man, its votaries, lovers. And by
The kindly air and the pure light of friendship
It nourished is; and by the hands of friends
Upraised, and by them tended. Yea, whosoever
This marvel has embraced, he blessèd is.

II

This race of brothers, these to whom the light
Shines brightest over all the ways of earth,
Wherever they have met have found their God;
Wherever they have dwelt have blessed the
place.

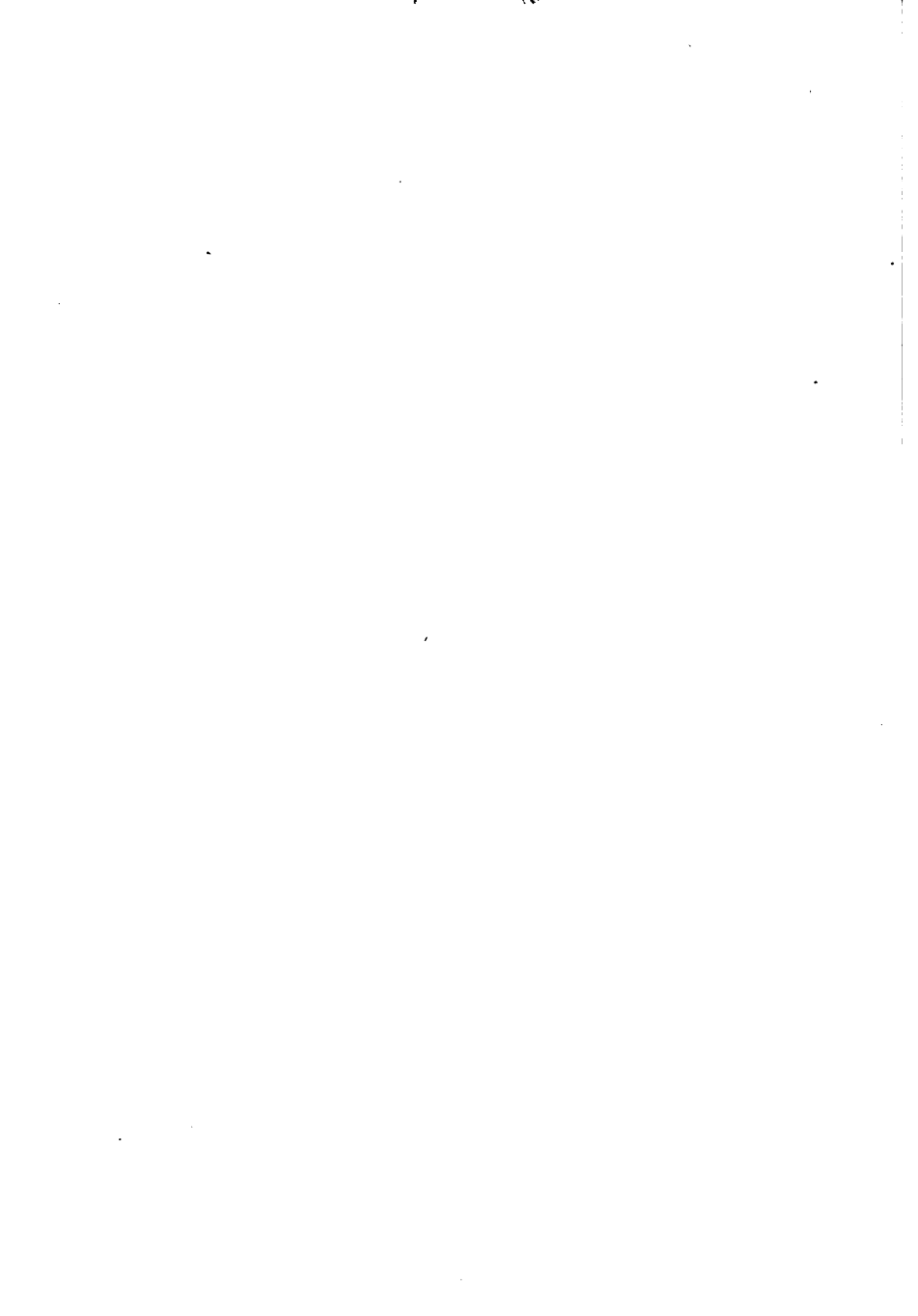
And they have girded all their powers fast,

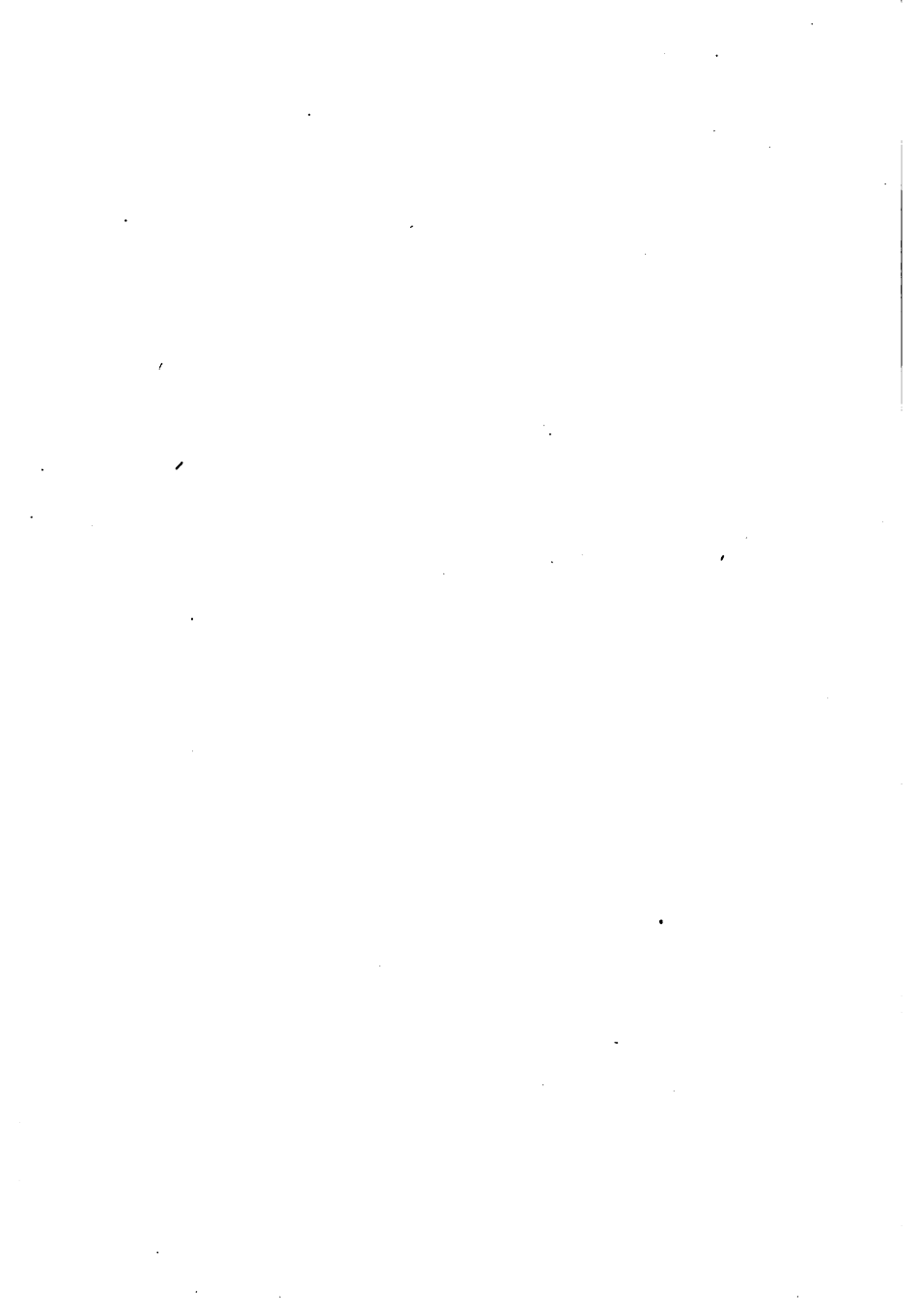
OTHER POEMS

And they have builded them inviolate Faith,
And they have left the touchstone of our end.

III

It is the union and the mighty strength
Of men who have not lost their brotherhood.
Of such who are not masters of the slave;
Of such who grow not old in usury.
Of such to whom the light of day is fair
And glances of their fellows beautiful,
Of such to whom the sacred truth is young.





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